

July 10, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 02-150
Application by the BellSouth Corporation for Authorization Under Section 271 of the
Communications Act to Provide In-Region, Interlata Services in the States of Alabama,
Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Association of PARTNERS IN EDUCATION is pleased submit the following comments in support of BellSouth's application to provide In-Region, Interlata Service in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. PARTNERS IN EDUCATION represents more than 400,000 partnership programs that involve over 7 million corporate and citizen volunteers. Our members also work with many telecommunications providers to launch education technology initiatives.

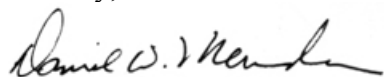
PARTNERS IN EDUCATION believes that BellSouth's entrance into the long-distance market in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina will provide numerous benefits to the education community, including choice, competition and affordability. We are committed to making sure that schools have access to affordable materials, services and products, including telecommunication services. Given the growing use and cost of telecommunications services in the delivery of education, market competition and consumer choice is necessary. Expanded competition means more affordable telecommunication services and a wider array of products and packages for schools and families. The benefits will extend beyond the classroom. Affordable access to the Internet, homework hotlines and distance learning from home are also important to the education community.

BellSouth has a history of investing in education initiatives and has forged many effective partnerships with the education community. Most recently, the BellSouth Foundation completed its ambitious five-year teacher education initiative, ReCreating Colleges of Teacher Education, designed to advance student achievement in the South by helping colleges to reinvent their teacher preparation programs. A key goal of the initiative was to have a regional impact on teacher reform by creating a network among the grantees in hopes that they would become a collective voice for education reform. This is just one example of BellSouth's community involvement that PARTNERS IN EDUCATION values because it contributes positively to the education of our youth.

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION believes that BellSouth's entrance into the Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina long distance market will increase competition and drive prices down for schools and families. The public service commissions in Alabama, Kentucky,

Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina have concluded that BellSouth has met the 14-point checklist as mandated by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. We urge the FCC to approve the application by BellSouth so more of our families, schools and business in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina can reap the benefits of competition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel W. Merenda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Daniel W. Merenda
President and CEO